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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
4 December 1967

MEMORANDUM

UPI Item Claiming Hanoi Has Toughened
Terms for Settlement

1. We have no confidence in either Thaler (the author of this piece) or his alleged Communist sources in assessing North Vietnamese attitudes toward the war and negotiations. Thaler has long had a record as a speculative journalist who bases his material on very little in the way of sound sources. He wrote an item in late October, also based on remarks of a "highly qualified Communist diplomatic source," which alleged that Hanoi had hardened its stand and would refuse to "talk" to the US prior to the elections, even if there was a bombing halt. This was speculation, and the current article seems to be more of the same. Much of it is a rehash of well-known points, with a few new twists to give it a current peg.

2. It is true that Hanoi continues to take a harsh and uncompromising attitude toward a settlement of the war. It has never sought a compromise settlement. The North Vietnamese want an American defeat. They cannot defeat the US militarily, but they aim eventually to achieve a political victory through US concessions. This has been their approach since at least early 1966. There is no sign, however, that Hanoi has "raised the price for ending the Vietnam war," as the article says. Hanoi's terms for a settlement continue to be based on US acceptance of the Four Points.

3. We note also that the article's allegations about Soviet attitudes are at odds with what Soviet diplomats have been saying in private. As part of its effort to bring about a prolonged bombing pause, Moscow has been peddling the line that Hanoi would agree to talks "soon" after a bombing halt. (This point will be treated in today's Current Intelligence publications.)

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI
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DDI

Herewith the comments requested
by the Director on the UPI story
regarding Hanoi's toughening
stand in its terms for ending
the Vietnam war.

4 December 1967

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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